DEATH CUSTOMS

763 Relatives gather before the death and begin to cry: this however
[171] does not seem so stereotyped a procedure as that of the Mohave[1] and
Walapai. The corpse is laid with his head to the northwest, his hair is
764 washed, face painted, and he is dressed in good clothes contributed by
relatives and friends. Sometimes the face is covered. The following day
everyone gathers to wail for several hours or perhaps the whole day.
[624] The chiefs talk, particularly to the relatives, admonishing them to care
for the property of the deceased and not to commit suicide. The mourners
[171] do not sing or dance as they know the Mohave and Walapai do.

Formerly, the body was placed on a pyre at some distance from the
[178] camp, together with the choicest possessions of the deceased. Now-
adays it is buried with these objects among the rocks of the lower canyon
level somewhere near the falls below the village. After a few days such
768 of the dead man's belongings as were in the camps on the plateau are
brought down and burned on the grave. Two or three good horses are
killed at the grave (their bodies are probably not burned) or they are
pushed over the cliff. Saddles are often burned or destroyed; sometimes
they are left on the horses. On the return of the funeral party a corpse
[783] bearer might wash his hands, or bathe, and possibly wash his clothes.
There is no formal purification, nor are those who come in contact with
the corpse shunned.

Cremation began to go out of use sixty years ago, the last body being
764 burned twenty-five years back. The change was not suggested nor
178 enforced by the whites. "We wanted to change: we thought burning
was not a good way." I am not certain that the change coincided with
the introduction of the Ghost dance influences in 1870.

Formerly the house of the deceased was burned. Now, as a rule,
768 the brush covering alone is burned, the timbers being saved to re-build
178 elsewhere, though there is no great change in location. The modern
frame house is abandoned for some time. Thus, when their boy died in
1918, Prince and his family went to live with his wife's father. In 1920
he built another house across the creek from the old one, and in 1921 he
was living part of the time in both structures.

768 Farm land which belonged to the dead is allowed to lie idle for a year
or two. This is not always the case, for Panamida planted in Nina's
[183] fields (his elder brother's daughter) the year following her death; though,
[428] to be sure, the field really belonged to him. Should there be dependants,

[1] Kroeber, (a), 881.

while medicine men had no such role. Sinyella, Manakaja, Supai Charley, and Fukadagova's father, all chiefs, made puberty dresses in former times. However, in more recent generations, Allen Akaba and Mark Hanna, both shamans, are named among those who "know how" to make such dresses. 881 292

The buckskin dress commonly worn was described by Spier (1928, 185-8). It consisted of a one-piece front section, suspended by a loop around the neck which covered the body in front from the neckline to the ankles and a back apron, tied around the waist and hanging to the ankles. Both front and back were fringed down the sides and along the lower edge. The skirt was left open on both sides, exposing a girl's thighs while she was moving about or sitting down. A rabbitskin blanket was worn over the shoulders of this dress. [177] Originally, a woven Hopi belt was preferred, but in more recent times a silver conch belt was sometimes worn.

A puberty dress differed from the ordinary one only in color; it was stained red by rubbing powdered ocher into the buckskin. In the later [386] period of using buckskin dresses for this ceremony, silver buttons occasionally were added to the skirt front, their arrangement being an individual [301] matter. Doubtless, variations in decoration were carried out according to personal perferences and materials on hand.

The only symbolic meaning of the puberty dress or its design apparently was its red color, which symbolized the menstrual blood, although no [822] emphasis was given this point by verbalization during the ceremony.

After its use at puberty, a dress was saved for wear at round dances or funerals, or on other special occasions. Its color did not make it objectionable for such future use. Although it was reported that a few women might still have their puberty dresses, the investigator was unable to find one. In [768] each case, the woman had burned it upon the death of the man who had made it for her, or in some instances she had simply discarded it because it was old or shabby.

After the practice of making buckskin puberty dresses fell into disuse, a simple cotton dress was substituted. If an old dress were used, it would be discarded later.

Today menstrual pads and all things that become soiled with blood are [789] buried. Burning them would cause a girl to be barren, to miscarry in [826] pregnancy, or to lose all her children in infancy.

Bath, Shampoo, and Paint

At the onset of her first menstrual period, a pubescent girl is bathed, 881 her hair is shampooed, and her face and body painted by her mother, who 515 meanwhile admonishes her to be industrious, so that she may become a good 302